WHAT DOES CINEMATIC DEPRESSION LOOK LIKE & FEEL LIKE THROUGH TIME?

Ann Cvetkovich (Depression: A Public Feeling 2012) on Depression: “Depression lurks in a lot of different places, and rather than naming it as such I prefer to pay attention to the texture of lived experience and its complex combinations of hope and despair.” p.157-158

My Research Question: How does cinema reorient understandings of depression away from medicalised conceptions, toward cinema’s rendering of depression as an embodied and temporal experience grounded in shared feelings and sensations between characters, atmospheres, and audiences?

Methodology:
close textual analysis of 8 contemporary films, drawing on phenomenology & affect theory

Provisional Findings:
Cinema helps shake away the pathologising framework of looking at depression, and instead gives us a different vocabulary for experiencing and discussing depression as an affective and shared experience.

1950s
- The Housewife
- A Happy Couple
- The American Dream
- Mundanity
- Banality
- Dreams of a New, Exciting Life

REVOLUTIONARY ROAD (2008)

1960s
- Sophistication
- Refinement
- Suppression
- Organisation
- Outward Perfection

A SINGLE MAN (2009)

2000s
- The Perfect Host
- Extroverted Bubbliness
- Responsibility
- Compartmentalism

THE HOURS (2002)

2010s
- The Beautiful Bride
- Extravagance
- Stuckness
- Unkemptness
- Escapism

MELANCHOLIA (2011)

FUTURE
- Articiality
- Clean & Streamlined
- Constant Integration with Technology in Daily Life
- Physical and Emotional Isolation

HER (2013)

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